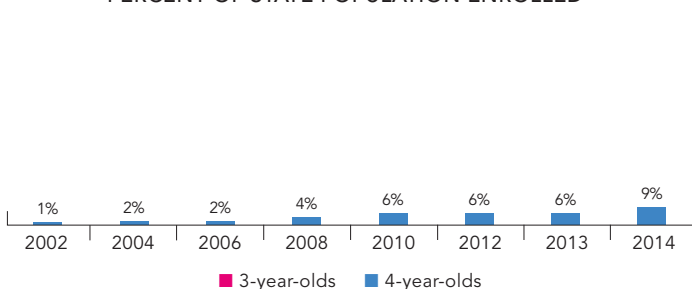


Alabama

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED*



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED* (2014 DOLLARS)



Since 2000, the state of Alabama has funded preschool education programs for 4-year-olds through First Class: the Alabama Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program. All state residents meeting the age criteria were automatically eligible for the program. Enrollment had stayed relatively low due to limited resources. Increased funding in 2007-2008 led to increased access, along with technical support and scholarships for teachers working toward finishing their degrees. During the 2011-2012 school year, enrollment and appropriations grew slightly, following flat funding and no growth in access for several years before that.

In 2013-2014, Alabama met its goal of having at least one pre-K classroom in each of its 67 counties. First Class classrooms are housed in many different locations, including Head Start programs, private child care centers, community organizations, faith-based centers, colleges and universities, military agencies and public schools. A competitive grant process determines the program locales, with grant amounts varying by location. In order to receive a grant, grantees must locally match the award, and sliding-scale fees can be included in the matching funds.

Teacher certification standards were revised in 2005-2006 to ensure that newly employed pre-K educators have specialized training in early childhood education. All 10 NIEER quality benchmarks were met for the first time with these revisions and the program has maintained all Benchmarks. In 2008-2009, the First Class program was assessed for program impact, child outcomes, and process quality. An aligned set of standards for pre-K children, the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children, was instituted in 2012 by the Office of School Readiness and the state Department of Education's Special Education services. Although there is currently no kindergarten entry assessment required by the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs is working with local school systems to implement Teaching Strategies GOLD as a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. This is voluntary and in the pilot phase.

Alabama's business community has extended significant support to preschool since 2009-2010, when business leaders recommended the state legislature increase funding for preschool education. The Business Council of Alabama collaborated with the Alabama School Readiness Alliance to create a task force, which set out to develop policy recommendations for increasing access to high-quality prekindergarten throughout the state. In 2013-2014 the budget was increased by \$10M, adding 120 new state-funded pre-K classrooms. A new coaching and mentoring system was put into place to ensure quality standards were met. Each grantee signs assurances prior to receiving grant funding to acknowledge their understanding of the quality requirements.

The Office of School Readiness in the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs has partnered with a team of researchers to document the effects of the state's voluntary public pre-K program.

In 2014, Alabama was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant for \$17.5 million.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
32	None Served

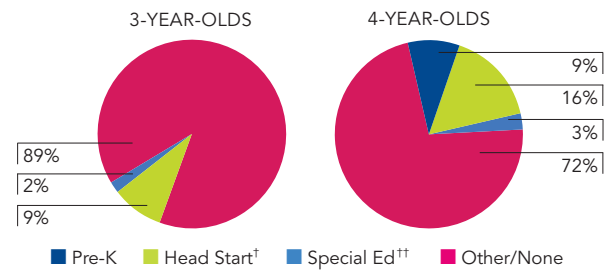
RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
19	13

FIRST CLASS PRE-K: ALABAMA'S VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	5,505
School districts that offer state program	100% (counties)
Income requirement	No income requirement
Hours of operation	6.5 hours/day
Operating schedule	5 days per week, Academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	3,731
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	14,958
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



[†] Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.
^{††} Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE (public); CD (nonpublic) ¹	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	30 clock hours per year	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	18 ²		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	1:10 ²		
Screening/referral	Vision; hearing; immunizations; and support services	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Lunch; snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

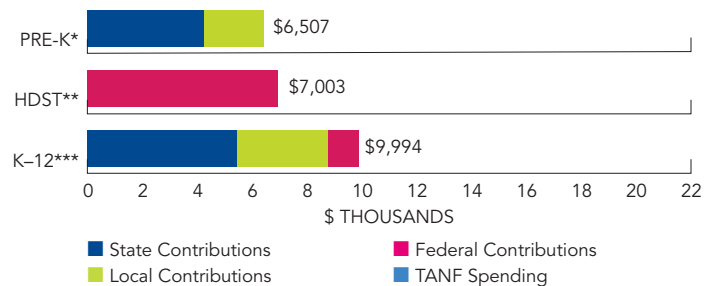
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RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$23,604,115
Local match required?	Yes
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,288
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$6,507

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
 ** Head Start per-child spending for the 2013-2014 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years figured have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start.
 *** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. Data are for the '13-'14 school year, unless otherwise noted.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



¹ Any preschool teachers with degrees in elementary education must obtain the P-3rd add-on or complete additional early childhood coursework within three years. Some public school settings choose to hire non-certified lead teachers if those teachers have a bachelor's degree in child development.
² Head Start programs may apply for a waiver to have up to 20 children and a ratio of 1:10; other programs have a maximum class size of 18 and ratio of 1:9.

³ Support services include parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, and transition to kindergarten activities.